

WISSENSCHAFTLICHE KURZMITTEILUNG

Identity of *Apodemus sylvaticus* (Linnaeus, 1758) recorded from
Qatar (Rodentia: Muridae)

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MADKOUR (1982) reported 4 ♂♂ *Apodemus sylvaticus arianus* (Blanford 1881) from a single burrow containing a nest at Om Selal Mohammad, 15 km W of Doha, Qatar, as a first record for the Arabian Peninsula south of Lebanon. This was accepted by CORBET (1984: 22) as "apparently first record of this or any other species of *Apodemus* in the Arabian Peninsula". However, independent collecting in Qatar (NADER 1984) did not yield any further *A. sylvaticus* and this species was not included in a checklist of ten species recorded from this country.

In his paper, MADKOUR (1982) mentions some characters which may have led him to identify his mice as *A. sylvaticus* (Linnaeus 1758): smaller size than other *Apodemus* sp. in the NW of the Arabian Peninsula, white underside of body, pectoral spot present (no colouration described), hands and feet white, the hind foot (as considered by him) relatively long.

The measurements (n = 4) given by MADKOUR (1982) however are too small for an *Apodemus* sp.: HB 54-77, T 70-89, E 11-14, HF 12-17. Such measurements (small body with tail longer than HB, very short feet) indicate a misidentification of *Mus* sp.

The skull as illustrated by MADKOUR (1982: fig. 2) shows the specimen pictured to be at least subadult (basioccipital suture widely open), with skull proportions (rostrum length: skull length) typical for *Mus*, with small auditory bullae and reduced upper and lower third molars, differentiating the genus *Mus* from other Murinae in this part of the Palaearctic.

MADKOUR (1982: fig. 1) remarks that the baculum of his specimens differs from the genus *Apodemus* as illustrated by HARRISON (1972: fig. 192). His own illustration of the baculum, without differentiation between the Corpus ossis penis and the Dens ossis penis, agrees well with the genus *Mus* (see NIETHAMMER and KRAPP 1978: fig. 7b).

The above analysis of information contained in MADKOUR (1982) leaves no doubt that the record of *Apodemus sylvaticus* in fact concerns *Mus musculus* Linnaeus, 1758. A more detailed identification of this outdoor house mouse has to be postponed until specimens are available for comparison. HARRISON (1981) records the tiny subspecies *M. m. gentilulus* Thomas, 1919 from neighbouring Bahrain and the UAE, and the larger *M. m. praetextus* Brants, 1827 from Hofuf/Saudi Arabia and northwards.

Together with additional records of a bat (MADKOUR 1986: *Otonycteris hemprichi* Peters, 1859) and a rodent (MADKOUR 1983, 1984: *Gerbillus cheesmani* Thomas, 1919) the mammal fauna of Qatar presently comprises 13 species only. Compared to similar regions (e.g. CLAYTON 1983: 23-24 species in Kuwait) this number is rather low, very probable due to lack of field work.

Literature

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